

COLLECTION OVERVIEW INDIANS OF NORTH AMERICA

I. SCOPE

This overview describes the collections of the Library of Congress relating to the indigenous peoples of North America, principally in the present United States, dating from the pre-Columbian period to the present. The vast majority of the Library's published North American Indian material in the general collections is found in the classification span E51-E99. Here are found archaeological and ethnological publications from government and private institutions, tribal histories, captivity narratives, and most of the Indian-related topics.

Because North American Indians have contributed to, and have been studied by, the fields of anthropology, archaeology, ethnology, law, religion, language and art, relevant material also exists in classifications G, K, B, P and N. Related Collection Overviews are American History, and Anthropology, Archaeology, and Ethnology. The guiding Collections Policy Statement is U.S. History. The Anthropology and Archaeology Collections Policy Statement is also related.

II. SIZE

A precise count of this material does not exist as materials related to American Indians are found across many LC classes, but as of July 2008, there were 35,974 titles in the Library's Online Catalog in class E51-E99 alone. In addition, relevant bibliographies and Indian-related material in other general works and microforms swell these numbers considerably. The Microform Reading Room also contains thousands of items representing printed, manuscript and archival material. For example, on microfilm is found the *Annual Report of the Office (Bureau) of Indian Affairs* from 1838-1943; *North American Indians: Photographs from the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution* (4,700 photographs); and *Western Americana 1550-1900* (over 7,000 titles).

III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

With its concentration on American history, of which Native Americans were an integral part, the Library of Congress holdings are very extensive for materials by and about American Indians, tribal culture, and relations with the United States Government. The Library's American Indian holdings in the general collections are augmented by reprint publishing and the publishing of many manuscript and archival collections. In addition to the extensive book, serial, and microform collections related to the study of North American Indians, the Library has important resources in manuscripts, geography and maps, prints and photographs, motion picture, and other special formats.

IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION

In addition to the prodigious general collections, the Library's Manuscript Division has

holdings, in paper and microform, of Indian-related historical material that are probably larger than those of any other institution. Among these holdings are papers of numerous U.S. presidents, government and military officials, explorers and others involved in relations with American Indians.

The Library also has rich collections of graphic and documentary images related to American Indians. Several thousand images relating to Native American Indians are in the Prints and Photographs Division. In addition, there are hundreds of photographs associated with collections such as those of the American Folklife Center and the Manuscript Division. The Prints and Photographs Division also contains original or reproductions of prints, lithographs, mezzotints, and engravings. The Rare Book and Special Collections Division has early, scarce published volumes of American Indian images such as those of George Catlin, Thomas L. McKenney, and J.O. Lewis, as well as rare volumes of published Native American art and photographic portfolios.

The Library's American Folklife Center is the holder of the largest collection of Indian-related field recordings, including more than 1500 hours of early speech, songs, and rituals. Among the recordings is the very first field recording ever made which was of two Passamaquoddy men recorded in March 1890 by Jesse Walter Fewkes. The Music Division contains sheet music and books of American Indian music and song.

In terms of integrated research necessary for the historical study of American Indians, the Library's maps and cartographic records, both published and unpublished, are more abundant than at most institutions. Maps relating to Indian lands, language groups, military campaigns and colonial territories further enhance the ability of scholars to undertake research on American Indians at the Library of Congress.

V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Subscription databases have further strengthened the Library's extensive American Indian collections. *North American Indian Thought and Culture* contains over 119,000 pages of text and images consisting of biographies, auto-biographies, personal narratives, speeches, diaries, letters, and oral histories. A full-text collection of the newspapers, magazines and journals of the native press is found in *Ethnic News Watch*.

Digital collections relating to American Indians found in the Library's American Memory collections include: *Edward S. Curtis's The North American Indian: Photographic Images*, containing the full text of the twenty volumes of narrative text and photogravure images of Edward Sheriff Curtis's *The North American Indian* (1907-1930); *American Indians of the Pacific Northwest*; *Omaha Indian Music*; *American Notes: Travels in America, 1750-1920*; and *History of the American West, 1860-1920: Photographs from the Collection of the Denver Public Library*.

For congressional documents tracing the history of Indian-U.S. Government relations, *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation* provides coverage from 1774-1875 and includes *Indian Land Cessions in the United States, 1784 to 1894*.

VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS

The Library's book and serial collections in linguistics, locally and tribally produced materials, and some Canadian materials, are not comprehensive. The Library also lacks locally produced recordings of contemporary Native American ceremonies and contemporary language recordings. Official documents of the United States government relating to American Indian affairs are only held in the Library if the documents were published, otherwise these would be held in the National Archives and Records Administration.